

VERMONT EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT

FAMILY

EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS

WORKBOOK



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ARE YOU PREPARED FOR A DISASTER?

Disasters can happen anytime, with or without warning. A disaster can be the result of a man-made incident such as a terrorist attack, or natural event like a flood or ice storm. Vermont's history demonstrates that no community is immune to the affects of a disaster, and so it is important to take steps now to prepare.

This workbook highlights some of the steps you can do now to prepare yourself, your family, your business and your community. Follow the **D. A. R. E. to Prepare** approach. **D**etermine what hazards may affect you and take steps to mitigate their impact. **A**ddress any special concerns or circumstances you have with local emergency managers. **R**eady yourself and your family by creating a disaster supply kit and disaster plan. **E**ducate yourself by enrolling in disaster preparedness, response, and recovery courses.

During an emergency, safety and well-being are the top priorities. To best prepare for a disaster, it is important to create a disaster supply kit which has at least three days worth of fresh water, non-perishable food, medications, and flashlights. It is also important that you have a battery powered radio so that you can stay informed. Follow the suggestions in this workbook and visit www.Ready.gov for help in building your kit.

Emergency planning is a key part of being prepared. Create an emergency plan for your family or business. If a disaster occurs, how will you contact each other? What will you do about your pets? Which documents are important and should be protected from flood waters? These are some of the questions that your plan should answer.

When making your emergency plan, assess your home or business for potential hazards. Your municipality's Emergency Management Director can assist you. It is important to take steps now to reduce the impact hazards can have on you. Among the different hazards faced by Vermonters, flooding ranks among the most likely and most costly. The Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) manages the National Flood Insurance Program. For more information go to www.floodsmart.gov.

This workbook is intended to help get you started with disaster preparedness. For more information contact your local Emergency Management Director or Vermont Emergency Management.

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Comments about this workbook should be forwarded to: Vermont Emergency Management
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Waterbury VT 05671-2101

DISASTER PREPAREDNESS CHECKLIST

- ☐ Identify a friend or relative in a different state who can coordinate communications in case your family is separated.
- ☐ Talk with officials about school disaster plans.
- ☐ Prepare a disaster supply kit with emergency supplies (including but not limited to):
 - Flashlight with extra batteries
 - Whistle for emergency signaling
 - Portable, battery-operated radio with extra batteries
 - First Aid Kit and manual
 - Emergency food and water supplies for three days
 - Non-electric can opener
 - Essential medicines for at least seven days
 - Cash and credit cards
 - Other supplies necessary for life (non-perishable food, water, etc.)
- ☐ Make a list of important items and stores where they can be purchased:
 - Special equipment and supplies, e.g., hearing aid batteries
 - Current prescriptions names and dosages
 - Names, addresses, and telephone numbers of doctors and pharmacists
 - Detailed information about your medication regimen and medical history
- ☐ Ensure that all family members wear appropriate medical-alert tags.
- ☐ Know the location of shelters, evacuation points and routes in your community.
- ☐ Do a hazard assessment of your home and mitigate identified hazards.
- ☐ Know the location of, and how to use, your home's utility shut-offs.
- ☐ Speak to you children about what they should do during an emergency.
- ☐ Keep important phone numbers listed by the telephone and teach children how and when to call 9-1-1.
- ☐ Purchase a NOAA Weather Radio with a tone alert feature to stay informed about severe weather and other important information.
- ☐ Consult with your insurance agent about your insurance coverage, as most policies do not cover earthquake or flood damage. Protect valuable property and equipment with special riders and consider obtaining business continuity insurance.
- ☐ Determine how you will protect your pets or animals in the event of a disaster – most shelters do not allow pets (working service animals are permitted).
- ☐ Check that all smoke and carbon monoxide detectors are working. Every six months change the smoke and carbon monoxide detector batteries and the perishable supplies in your disaster kit.
- ☐ Speak with neighbors about their emergency plans, and how you can help each other during a crisis.
- ☐ Enroll in a CPR, First Aid or disaster preparedness course.



BUILD A FAMILY DISASTER KIT

A disaster kit should contain all of the items that you would need for three days. It should be stored in a place that has easy access. All family members should know where the kit is located and the contents should be checked or replaced every six months. It is important that the kit be easy to move so that you could take it with you if you evacuate.



- ⇒ Include in the kit important documents such as medical and financial records, maps, emergency contact lists, etc.
- ⇒ If you have children, include a favorite stuffed animal, blanket, books, games or toys.
- ⇒ Store at least one gallon of water per person per day. Store the water in clean plastic containers. Label and date each container, replacing the stored water every six months.
- ⇒ Pack blankets, a first aid kit, a non-electric can opener, a pack of playing cards, tools, medications, clothing, hygiene supplies, a battery-powered radio, and flashlight with extra batteries.
- ⇒ Store non-perishable foods that do not require refrigeration or cooking and need little or no water. Store the food in a plastic or metal container to protect from pests. Label and date each container, replacing the food every six months. Include a can of solid fuel and matches to heat the food. Examples of food items include:
 - ⇒ ready-to-eat meats
 - ⇒ dried cereal, fruits or vegetables
 - ⇒ canned or dried soups and juices
 - ⇒ peanut butter and non-perishable jelly
 - ⇒ food for infants or people on special diets
 - ⇒ salt, pepper, spices, sugar
 - ⇒ candy or cookies
 - ⇒ instant coffee or tea
 - ⇒ crackers or trail mix
- ⇒ Pack an envelope of cash and coins (coins for pay-phone calls).



- Keep canned foods in a dry place where the temperature is cool.
- Store boxed food in tightly closed plastic or metal containers to protect from pests and to extend its shelf life.
- Throw out any canned good that becomes swollen, dented, or corroded.
- Change stored food and water supplies every six months. Be sure to write the date you store it on all containers.
- Re-think your needs every year and update your kit as your family needs change.
- Keep items in airtight plastic bags and put your entire disaster supplies kit in one or two easy-to-carry containers.

EMERGENCY PROTECTIVE ACTIONS

During an emergency, officials may recommend that you and your family take an emergency protective action. This could include evacuating your home or business, sheltering-in-place, or some other action. Through the Emergency Alert System (EAS), which utilizes commercial radio, television and cable systems, emergency management officials broadcast instructions and information about the emergency. The NOAA weather alert radio, which receives weather information broadcast by the National Weather Service, can also receive EAS messages. These radios are available for purchase at your local hardware or electronics store.

How to Evacuate

When conditions threaten life or safety, public safety officials may order an evacuation. If you need to evacuate your home or business follow these guidelines:

Gather all persons in the house and leave together, taking your disaster supply kit with you.

- ⇒ DO NOT try to pick up children at their schools. They will be taken to a designated reception center or shelter outside the area where you may pick them up.
- ⇒ Household members outside the area may be advised not to return during an evacuation. They will be directed to the reception center or shelter where they can join you.
- ⇒ Listen to an Emergency Alert radio or television station for information and instructions. Listen carefully to the Emergency Alert System for information about evacuation routes and follow those instructions. Local officials may alter the route to expedite evacuations. Unless it is an emergency, DO NOT call your local fire or police departments for information. Emergency workers will need their telephone lines for emergency use.
- ⇒ Wear protective clothing and sturdy shoes.
- ⇒ Close and lock windows and doors.
- ⇒ Check with neighbors to see if they need assistance or shared transportation.
- ⇒ If you have livestock, unless otherwise instructed, shelter them with a three day supply of feed and water.
- ⇒ Obey all traffic control officials along your route.

If you have time...

- ⇒ Turn off lights, unnecessary appliances, water and gas connections.
- ⇒ Make arrangements for pets as they may not be allowed in shelters.
- ⇒ Notify a friend or family member, who is out of the area, where you are going and when you plan to leave.

How to Shelter-In-Place

When conditions threaten life or safety, public safety officials may order you to shelter-in-place. This means that you should immediately go indoors. If a shelter-in-place message is given for your community, you should do the following:

- ⇒ Go indoors and close all doors and windows. Turn off all window fans, air conditioners, clothes dryers, kitchen and bath exhaust fans, and other sources of outside air.
- ⇒ Keep pets indoors. If you have livestock, shelter them too. Use stored feed and water from covered source.
- ⇒ If you are traveling in a motor vehicle, close the windows and air vents and turn off the heater or air conditioners.
- ⇒ If sheltering-in-place is ordered during school hours, children will be sheltered in the school building and cared for by school personnel.

WINTER PREPAREDNESS

In Vermont, winters can bring heavy snowfall and very cold temperatures. Snow can block roads and cause power lines to fall. The cold temperatures can be dangerous if outdoor travelers are not dressed correctly. Hypothermia is a medical emergency which occurs when a person is in cold temperatures for a long time. The elderly and very young are particularly susceptible to hypothermia. It is important to listen to weather reports and heed winter weather warnings. Dressing appropriately for the weather is often the best protection against hypothermia.



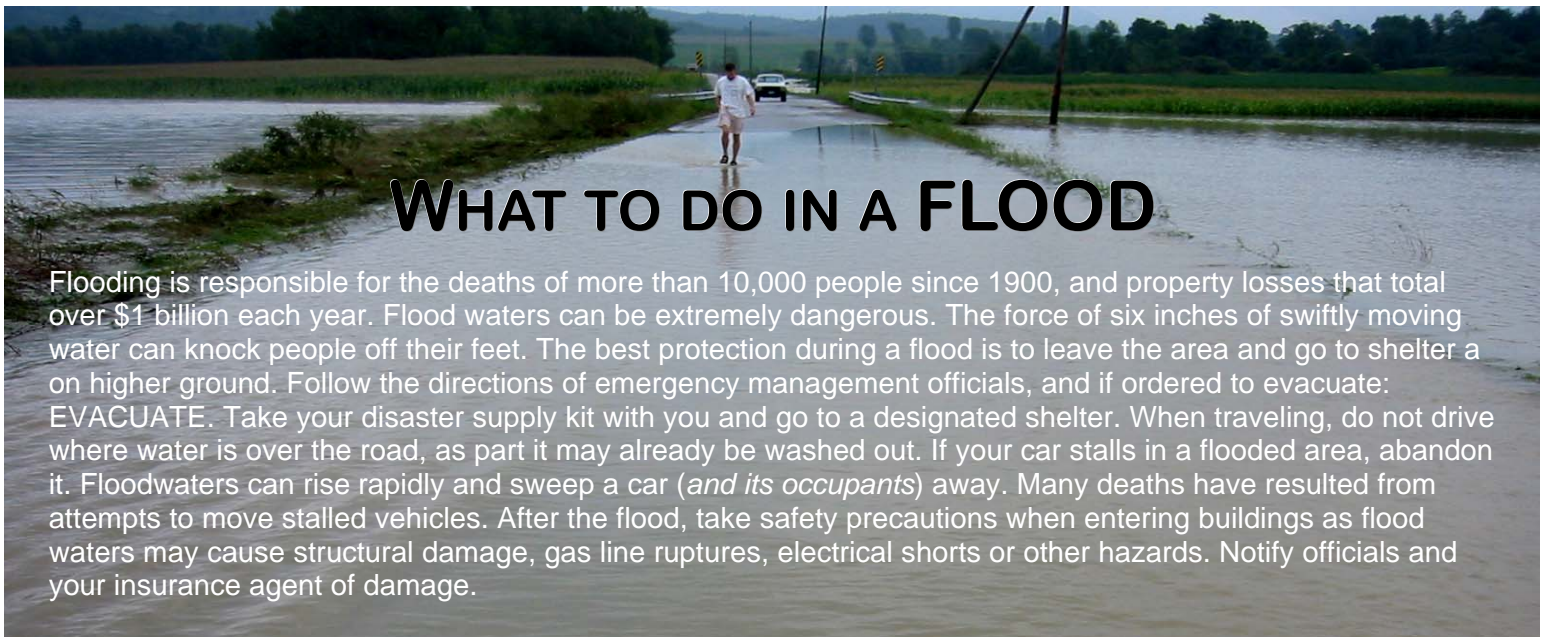
Vehicle safety precautions are also vital during the winter. Vehicles should have cold weather gear in case of a breakdown. If stranded during a winter storm you should remain in your vehicle, stay awake, and take steps to stay warm. To prevent carbon monoxide poisoning, ensure your exhaust pipe is not obstructed. During extreme weather, Vermont State Police at times adjust patrol schedules to provide late night aid for motorists on the interstates.

Winter Weather Terms

Freezing rain:	Rain that freezes when it hits the ground, creating a coating of ice on roads and walkways
Sleet:	Rain that turns to ice pellets before reaching the ground causing roads to freeze and become slippery
Winter Weather Advisory:	Cold temperatures, ice and snow are expected
Winter Storm Watch:	Severe weather such as heavy snow or ice is possible in the next day or two
Frost/Freeze Warning:	Below freezing temperatures are expected
Winter Storm Warning:	Severe winter conditions have begun or will begin very soon
Blizzard Warning:	Heavy snow and strong winds will produce a blinding snow, near zero visibility, deep drifts and life-threatening wind chill

WHAT TO DO IN A FLOOD

Flooding is responsible for the deaths of more than 10,000 people since 1900, and property losses that total over \$1 billion each year. Flood waters can be extremely dangerous. The force of six inches of swiftly moving water can knock people off their feet. The best protection during a flood is to leave the area and go to shelter on higher ground. Follow the directions of emergency management officials, and if ordered to evacuate: **EVACUATE**. Take your disaster supply kit with you and go to a designated shelter. When traveling, do not drive where water is over the road, as part of it may already be washed out. If your car stalls in a flooded area, abandon it. Floodwaters can rise rapidly and sweep a car (*and its occupants*) away. Many deaths have resulted from attempts to move stalled vehicles. After the flood, take safety precautions when entering buildings as flood waters may cause structural damage, gas line ruptures, electrical shorts or other hazards. Notify officials and your insurance agent of damage.



SMOKE DETECTOR BATTERY REPLACEMENT

Fire and public safety officials urge citizens to remember to change their smoke and carbon monoxide detector batteries when they change their clocks on the first Sunday in April and the last Sunday in October. More than 90% of American homes have smoke detectors, but an estimated one-third are either not working or missing batteries. Residential fires represent about 25% of all fires, and unattended cooking or human error is the leading cause. Careless smoking, however, is the leading cause of fire deaths. It is important that smoke detectors be installed in proper locations and be checked at least once a month. Many local fire departments offer free smoke and carbon monoxide detectors or fire prevention programs.

HOME FIRE SAFETY

Each year, more than 4,000 Americans die and more than 25,000 are injured in fires, many of which could be prevented. To protect yourself, it is important to understand the basic characteristics of fire. Fire spreads quickly; there is no time to gather valuables or make a phone call. In just two minutes, a fire can become life-threatening. In five minutes, a residence can be engulfed in flames.

Properly working smoke alarms double your family's survival. Place smoke alarms on every level of your residence. Place them outside bedrooms on the ceiling or high on the wall (4 to 12 inches from ceiling), at the top of open stairways, or at the bottom of enclosed stairs and near (but not in) the kitchen.

Make sure windows are not nailed or painted shut. Make sure security gratings on windows have a fire safety opening feature so they can be easily opened from the inside.

Consider escape ladders if your residence has more than one level, and ensure that burglar bars and other antitheft mechanisms that block outside window entry are easily opened from the inside.

For further assistance, ask your local fire department to inspect your residence for fire safety and prevention.

GENERATOR SAFETY

If installed improperly, the use of portable generators to supply household or business power can create a potential shock hazard by back-feeding onto the utility's lines. This creates a life-threatening situation for line crews clearing limbs from downed power lines. Any generator in use must have a disconnect switch which isolates the generator from the utility's incoming power line. Moreover, the use of portable generators, if installed improperly, can result in the production of poisonous gases into living spaces. Wherever possible, generators should be only installed outside. If the generator is to be installed inside, it should be located in a detached building or structure and vented to the outside.

ANIMALS IN DISASTERS

Approximately 50 percent of all U.S. households own a pet. While community disaster plans try to incorporate the care for animals in their plans, the plans can often only coordinate care — they cannot always provide it. Therefore, the best way for an animal owner to be prepared is to create a specific emergency plan that includes provisions for your animals. As most emergency shelters prohibit animals, you should find an out-of-area friend or business that can house your animals in the event you need to evacuate your home. Farm evacuations present unique problems. Appropriate planning is essential. Evacuations are best coordinated with neighbors, friends, livestock associations and horse clubs, and county extension educators. Both the destination and the method of transport need to be sorted out well in advance of any disaster. It is important that animals be identified and up to date on vaccines. It is advisable to create a disaster kit for your pet including food, a leash and other important items.



How to use the Homeland Security Advisory System



Severe Risk (Red)

- ⇒ *Complete the recommended actions of the lower levels.*
- ⇒ Listen to local emergency management officials and stay tuned to TV or radio for current information/instructions.
- ⇒ Be prepared to shelter-in-place or evacuate, as instructed.
- ⇒ Provide volunteer services only as requested.
- ⇒ Contact your school/business to determine status of work day and expect travel restrictions or delays.

High Risk (Orange)

- ⇒ *Complete recommended steps at the green, blue and yellow levels.*
- ⇒ Exercise caution when traveling, pay attention to travel advisories.
- ⇒ Review your family emergency plan and make sure all family members know what to do.
- ⇒ Be Patient. Expect some delays, baggage searches and restrictions at public buildings.
- ⇒ Check on neighbors or others that might need assistance in an emergency.

Elevated Risk (Yellow)

- ⇒ *Complete recommended steps at the green and blue levels.*
- ⇒ Ensure disaster supply kit is stocked and ready.
- ⇒ Check telephone numbers in family emergency plan and update as necessary.
- ⇒ Develop alternate routes to/from work or school and practice them.

Guarded Risk (Blue)

- ⇒ *Complete recommended steps at the green level.*
- ⇒ Review stored disaster supplies and replace items that are outdated.
- ⇒ Be alert to suspicious activity and report it to proper authorities.

Low Risk (Green)

- ⇒ Develop a family emergency plan. Share it with family and friends, and practice the plan. Create an "Disaster Supply Kit" for your household.
- ⇒ Be informed. Visit www.Ready.gov or obtain a copy of "Preparing Makes Sense, Get Ready Now" by calling: 1-800-BE-READY.
- ⇒ Examine volunteer opportunities in your community, such as Citizen Corps, Volunteers in Police Service, Neighborhood Watch or others, and donate your time.

Disaster Preparedness for People with Special Needs


Plan and Prepare for an Emergency

Simply put, preparedness is all about PLANNING! Emergency preparedness is knowing what to do and being ready to do it promptly and effectively in the event of an emergency. Being prepared means that you have a plan of action—you know what to do before the emergency occurs. To do this, you must know what hazards you face, what resources are available to you, and how to utilize them.

In some cases such as a flood or hurricane, you may have an early warning, which will give you several hours to act. However, sometimes you will have no prior warning of an emergency, such as with earthquakes, terrorist attacks or major fires.

Use the Disaster Preparedness Checklist to make a Disaster Supply Kit. Keep a disaster kit in your home and in each car. A disaster kit for your home should include water, food, first aid supplies, clothing, bedding, tools, emergency supplies, and any other special items that you would need. Store the items that you would need in the event of an evacuation in an easy-to-carry container.

It is important that local emergency officials know about your special needs BEFORE the emergency. This way, your needs can be planned for, and the resources allocated before the emergency begins.



**Notify Officials of
Special Needs
Before The
Emergency**

What about my Special Medical Needs?

When a disaster strikes, time is of the essence. A Health Information Form tells emergency responders what medical conditions and needs you have so that they can provide you with the appropriate support. You can obtain a form from your Local Emergency Management Director, Town Clerk or fire department, or from the Vermont Emergency Website: www.dps.state.vt.us/vem.

Keep the Health Information Form in your disaster supply kit with a MINIMUM 7-day supply of your medications.

Disaster Preparedness Checklist

- ◇ Create a self-help network of relatives and friends to assist you in an emergency
- ◇ Contact your Local Emergency Management Director so that plans can be created to assist you in an emergency.
- ◇ Wear appropriate Medical Alert tags and keep a current list of medications and dosages.
- ◇ Be ready to give brief, clear, and specific instructions to emergency personnel on how to operate or assist you with devices (wheelchairs, etc.)
- ◇ Prepare for the requirements (food, water, etc) of your working service animal.
- ◇ If you do not drive, talk with your network and local authorities about how to evacuate.
- ◇ If you live in an apartment, ensure that accessible exits are marked.

Special Alerting Devices

Emergency information is disseminated to the public through the Emergency Alert System (EAS). NOAA Weather Alert Radios, which are activated by the EAS system, have attachments for the deaf and blind communities. Such devices have either a visual signaler or vibrator which are activated by the weather alert radio. These devices are commercially available from many companies. For more information about these devices contact Vermont Emergency Management.

How can people with special needs get assistance?

Community based emergency management is the best means by which you can receive assistance during an emergency. This means that you MUST notify officials of your needs, preferably before the disaster, either by filling out a Special Needs Card or directly contacting your Local Emergency Management Director.

**ALL INFORMATION WILL BE
KEPT CONFIDENTIAL.**

How do I contact my Local Emergency Management Director?

Vermont State Law enables every municipality to have a Local Emergency Management Director. This individual may be reached either through your Town Clerk's Office, or by contacting Vermont Emergency Management.

FAMILY COMMUNICATIONS PLAN

FIRE POLICE MEDICAL Dial 9-1-1

It is important that all family members know what to do in the event of an emergency. Fill out this plan together and review it often. If you have children, discuss emergency and evacuation procedures with school officials.

Home Address: _____

Home Telephone: (____) _____-

Mom's Work Telephone number: (____) _____-

Dad's Work Telephone number: (____) _____-

Trusted Neighbor _____: (____) _____-

Out-of State Relative _____: (____) _____-

Contact this individual if your family is separated during an emergency.

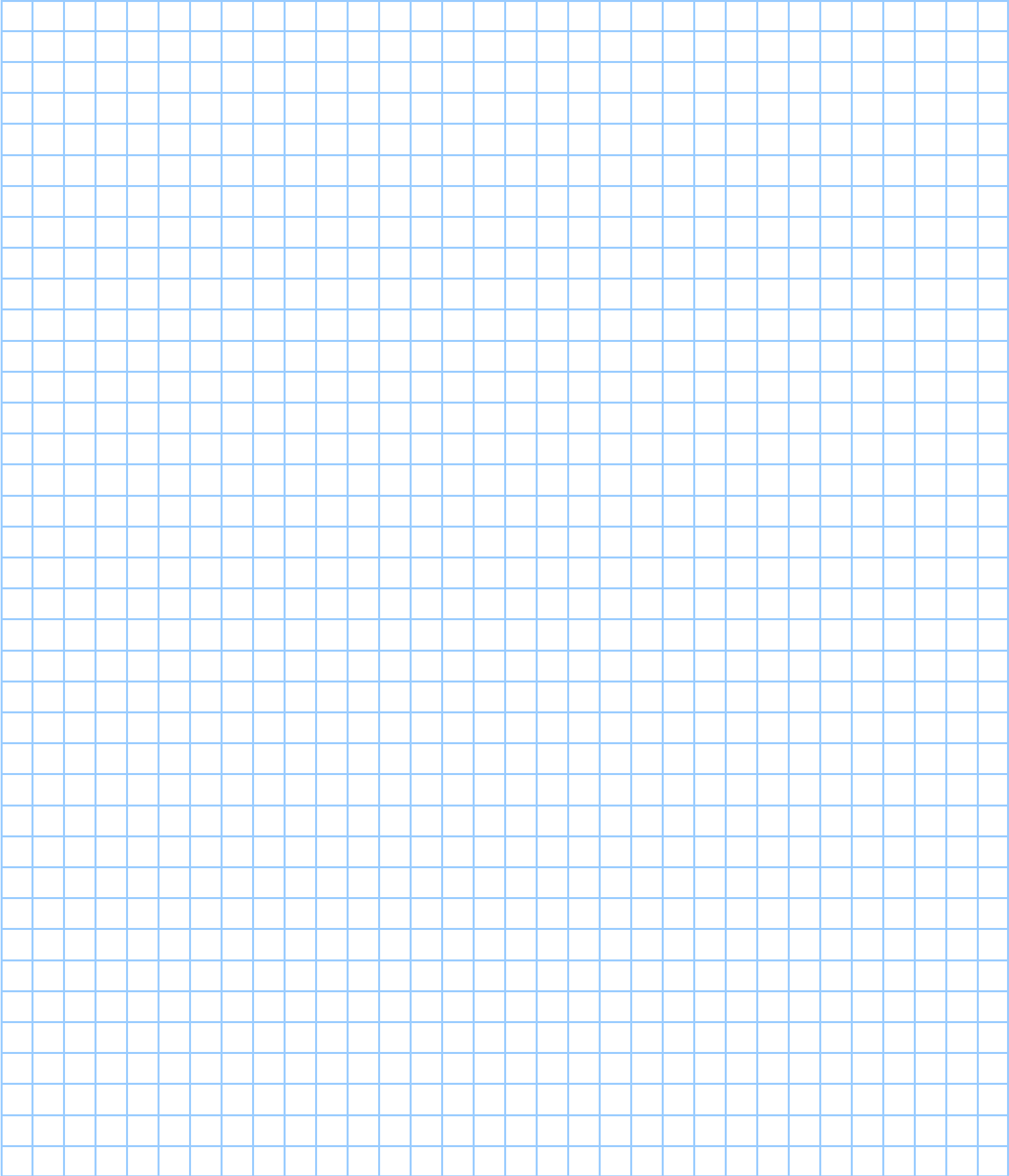
Location of nearest emergency shelter: _____

Important Telephone Numbers

Vermont Emergency Management	1-800-347-0488	1-888-545-7598 TTY
New England Poison Control Hotline	1-800-222-1222	
Vermont State Police Headquarters	1-800-862-5402	
American Red Cross		
(Northern VT)	1-800-660-9130	
(Central VT)	(802) 773-9159	
(Southern VT)	1-800-288-3554	
VTrans Road Conditions Hotline	1-800-429-7623	5-1-1
FEMA Flood Insurance Information	1-800-964-1784	
National Weather Service (Burl.)	(802) 862-2475	
Vermont 2-1-1 (Community Information and Referral)	1-866-652-4636	2-1-1

Home Fire Safety Map

As a family, draw a map of your home and surrounding property. Identify smoke detectors, fire extinguishers and the exits family members should use to escape from a fire. Mark a safe location where your family will meet after evacuating from a fire (e.g. by the large oak tree).



Are You Prepared?

Are *You* Prepared For An Emergency?

If an explosion resulted in a major fire in your area right now, while you are reading this sentence, would you be ready? The history of Vermont, especially in the past 10 years, dramatically illustrates Vermonters' vulnerability to the effects of hazards, both natural and man-made (including the emerging threat of terrorism). These dangers result in a range of problems that threaten life and property. There are however some steps that *you* can do to prepare yourself and your family for a disaster. With planning and preparation you and your family will be better able to cope with the difficulties that arise during an emergency.



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